

In the Claims:

Please amend the claims as follows.

1. (currently amended) A protective shield for a feed nozzle for use in an FCC Unit, wherein said feed nozzle incorporates a slit at its dispensing end for dispensing a spray of fluid feed, comprising:

a shield completely surrounding ~~the a~~ cylindrical circumference of said feed nozzle; and,
an extension of said shield extending around the end of said feed nozzle so as to cover a portion of said dispensing end of said feed nozzle, said extension of said shield having an open portion corresponding to, but larger than, said slit in said feed nozzle; wherein said protective shield includes a refractory-lined portion.

Claim 2 (canceled).

3. (original) The protective shield of Claim 1 wherein said open portion is large enough to enclose said spray emerging from said feed nozzle without making physical contact with said spray.

4. (original) The protective shield of Claim 1 wherein said open portion is in the shape of a rectangle.

5. (original) The protective shield of Claim 1 wherein said open portion is narrower at its longitudinal center and flares outwardly in each direction from said center.

6. (original) The protective shield of Claim 1 wherein the longitudinal sides of said open portion include inclined planes in the direction of said slit in said feed nozzle.

7. (original) The protective shield of claim 6 wherein said inclined planes are inclined at an angle of from about 5 degrees to about 10 degrees.

8. (currently amended) A method for protecting a feed nozzle for use in an FCC Unit wherein said feed nozzle has a slit in its end for spraying a fluid feed therefrom, comprising the steps of:

surrounding ~~the a~~ cylindrical circumference of said feed nozzle with a protective shield having a refractory-lined portion;

enclosing a portion of said end of said feed nozzle with an extension of said protective shield; and,

forming an opening in said extension wherein said opening in said extension is larger than said slit in said feed nozzle.

9. (original) The method of claim 8 further including the steps of:
performing spray visualization tests to determine the optimal shape of said opening in
said extension; and, forming said determined optimal shape in said opening.